



OESNEWS

Governor's Office of Emergency Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 21, 2008
NR 15-08

CONTACTS: Melanie Bedwell (916) 845-8456
Greg Renick (916) 502-7605

Governor Schwarzenegger Proclaims March 23-29, 2008, Tsunami Awareness Week

SACRAMENTO, CA — Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has proclaimed March 23-29, 2008, as Tsunami Awareness Week. This proclamation coincides with the first-ever “live” test of the Tsunami Warning System, and the ability to warn California residents of a potential emergency by broadcasting an actual tsunami warning on Wednesday March 26th in Humboldt County. The Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES), the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services and the National Weather Service (NWS) are conducting the test as a part of the state’s ongoing disaster preparedness efforts.

Tsunami Awareness Week is a time to remember and a time to prepare. In March 1964, an earthquake off the coast of Alaska generated a tsunami along the northern California coast that killed more than a dozen Del Norte County residents. “I applaud our state’s first responders for working diligently to plan for a potential tsunami,” said Governor Schwarzenegger. “Hopefully, such a catastrophe will never again affect California, but in the meantime, we will do everything we can to be ready.”

Californians who are most vulnerable to this type of natural disaster along the state’s coastline can take steps to make sure their families and communities are prepared. The Governor’s proclamation encourages residents to assemble an emergency kit that includes such items as flashlights, first aid supplies, and non-perishable foods. Families can also determine evacuation plans, a safe meeting place, and should also have all local emergency telephone numbers easily accessible. Helpful disaster and emergency preparedness tips are available on the OES Web site: www.oes.ca.gov.

“The Governor proclaiming Tsunami Awareness Week recognizes the importance of emergency preparation, which is why testing the Tsunami Warning System using the actual code is critical to our ability to save lives,” said OES Director Henry Renteria. “We want to know exactly what will happen with our communication systems before an actual tsunami event.”

-more-

2-2-2 Tsunami Awareness Week Test

The test will take place in Humboldt County between 10:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. with activation of the Emergency Alert System by the NWS office in Eureka, and will be transmitted to the public via local radio and television stations that serve the coastal communities of Humboldt County. Additionally, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Weather Radio All Hazards system will be activated.

Renteria said alerting people to next week's test is paramount. Humboldt County residents who listen to radio or television during the test period are likely to hear the standard alerting tone prior to a message that indicates a test is under way. However, television viewers may *not* see the word "TEST" in the crawler at the bottom of their television screens since the "live," rather than test, code is being used. "It is important that Humboldt County residents and non-residents, alike, who hear the radio or television alert tone on March 26th understand this is just a standard test," added Renteria.

Residents of Humboldt County are among the most familiar in the country with tsunamis and, according to test coordinators, the location of NOAA Weather Radio transmitters there make it very unlikely that the test message will bleed into neighboring counties or cause undue confusion about the test. However, to prepare for the north coast test, representatives from state OES, the Humboldt County OES, and the NWS have begun a public awareness effort featuring flyers and public service announcements on local radio and television stations to inform all regional residents, including disabled populations.

Wednesday's test is a precursor to future live tests of the Tsunami Warning System in other California coastal regions. Residents of Humboldt County have been encouraged to participate in the test by completing a survey on the test activity at: <http://www.weather.gov/tsunamitest.php>.

* * *

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES maintains the State Emergency Plan, which outlines the organizational structure for state management of the response to natural and manmade disasters. OES assists local governments and other state agencies in developing their own emergency preparedness and response plans in accordance with the Standardized Emergency Management System and the State Emergency Plan.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the plant it observes, predicts and protects.

#



OESNEWS

Governor's Office of Emergency Services

PROCLAMATION

California is fortunate to have such a magnificent coastline, but this benefit is not without its risks. With nearby offshore earthquake faults, we are vulnerable to potentially disastrous tsunamis, which is why it is important that our state is prepared and well-equipped for an emergency.

In March 1964, an earthquake off the Alaska coast caused a tsunami that hit Northern California, killing more than a dozen Del Norte residents. To mark the anniversary of this tragedy, my Office of Emergency Services will activate the Emergency Alert System this month in Humboldt County to test the efficiency of our warning system. A tsunami can strike with little notice so it is critical that California has a quick and reliable way to warn our citizens of potential danger.

Each of us can also take several steps to make sure our communities are as prepared as possible for a tsunami. We can assemble an emergency kit that includes items such as flashlights, first aid supplies and non-perishable foods. Families should determine an evacuation plan and meeting place, and we should all have local emergency phone numbers easily accessible.

I applaud our state's first responders for working diligently to plan for a potential tsunami. Hopefully, such a catastrophe will never again affect California, but in the meantime, we will do everything we can to be ready.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim March 23-29, 2008, as "Tsunami Awareness Week."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 10th day of March 2008.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor of California

ATTEST:

DEBRA BOWEN
Secretary of State